



Crofton Infant School

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Dear Parents

You may recall that in my last newsletter dated 27th February 2009 I mentioned our drive to achieve the Government's Healthy Schools Award. There is an expectation by central and local government that all local authority schools achieve this as soon as possible, and there is a duty placed upon us to ensure that we promote healthy living for your children. This duty forms part of the Ofsted inspection process where the effectiveness of schools are judged. We have developed a School Food Policy which can be found on our website or you can request a copy from the office.

We are very close to achieving the requirements of the award but there are a couple of areas around encouraging children to develop healthy lifestyles where we need your help and cooperation. The first area where we need your support is the one of snacks during morning break times, and the second is around promoting healthy lunches.

As a consequence of the above we will be changing our snacks policy with effect from next week and consulting with you over a healthy packed lunch policy.

Morning Break Times

From Monday 27th April children will only be permitted to bring into school fresh fruit or raw vegetables to be consumed just before their morning break. All children are already provided, free of charge, with fruit or raw vegetables every day. If you would prefer to send in your own fruit or vegetables with your child that is fine. Any other snack that is brought into school will be returned home to you uneaten.

Staff will be joining the children for their pre break time snack of fresh fruit and/or vegetables each day, ensuring that snack time is a social time where children and staff can discuss the importance of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles – effectively 7 or 8 minutes curriculum time each day will be devoted to this.

In addition there will be a blanket ban on sweets in school which will include birthdays as we are a large school and someone has a birthday every day! As an alternative to sending in sweets on your child's birthday you may wish to buy a class present such as a book or game that all the children could benefit from.

A recent incident, where some children found half empty sweet packets in the school playground and ate them without knowing what they contain, has partially prompted this sweet ban on health and safety grounds, along with the obvious health related issues. We hope that this will also have a positive impact on the amount of litter in the school grounds. We are certainly not saying that children should not eat sweets or other foods such as chocolate biscuits, but that school is not the place to promote them as an appropriate option.



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Drinks

As part of our '**Drink2Think**' policy we encourage children to bring water into school as there is a lot of evidence to show that drinking water regularly throughout the day improves learning. We already have a Drink2Think policy in place and I am just reminding you of this in this letter. We will monitor drinking bottles to ensure that only water is consumed in school. (Please see draft packed lunch policy for guidance on lunch time drinks).

Lunchtimes

As you will be aware there is increasing concern about rising rates of obesity and related health problems in children. As a school, it is part of our responsibility to raise awareness in children on how to eat healthily. Our school meals have improved significantly recently and we now want to develop a policy for packed lunches. This will help your child/children to eat well and ensure that all pupils are following the School Food Trust guidelines and national standards.

We appreciate that contents of some pupils packed lunches may already be healthy but for some families, however, this will require significant changes to shopping and eating habits; so we shall be introducing the policy gradually as well as providing information and advice about how to make packed lunches healthier. We would like all those having packed lunches to start gradually changing to the healthier guidelines, with everyone following them by September 2009.

We will continue to work with children in school to help them understand the need for this policy and the benefits which healthier eating will bring them.

As well as our draft new policy, please also look at the practical ideas for healthier packed lunches, both of which are attached to this letter. More information is also available on www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk.

I would very much like to hear from parents about their views on the attached draft packed lunch policy. Please respond via email to jbrown.crofton-inf.bromley@lgfl.net, in writing, in person via your class teacher or through a meeting with myself or one of the Assistant Headteachers (Mrs Davies, Mr Lambourne or Mrs Winbow).

General Health Issues

As part of our general responsibility under the Every Child Matters agenda I am sending out with this letter a booklet¹ produced by the government as part of the Change4Life Campaign. The booklet is called 'How are the kids?' You may have seen associated adverts on TV. Please read this information carefully and return the questionnaire to the address on the envelope if you are interested in finding out more.

School Council

We value the contribution that children bring to their own school and we consult and seek pupil thoughts about important issues through the School Council. Recently the School Council has discussed the issues around healthy eating telling us that:

- Most children were bringing in water to drink throughout the day but some children were having juice or squash in dark bottles so it is not noticeable!

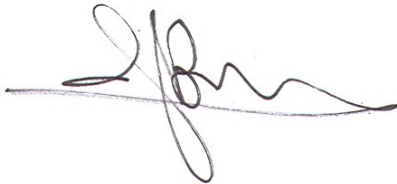
¹ If this is not with this letter it will follow shortly as we are awaiting further copies from The Department of Health

- The children suggested there should be more water fountains and that the ones we do have need to be working correctly, particularly for those children who do not bring bottled water into school.
- The School Council members wanted a letter sent home to parents to remind them of our Drink2Think policy.
- All Councillors reported that many children bring snacks to school that are not healthy such as sweets, chocolate, biscuits and crisps. The children said that when letters are sent home about healthy snacks things improve for a little bit but then people go back to bringing in unhealthy snacks.
- Most Councillors agreed that we should only allow fruit/vegetables and the children agreed fruit bars didn't count as they contain high amounts of sugar.
- Some children thought that snacks should be taken inside to allow them to sit down when eating and to stop so many children dropping litter when they finish their snack.
- Councillors said that children are bringing sweets in their lunch boxes and that they should not be doing this.

There is obviously strong support and understanding for our healthy school approach among the children and we hope that parents will support us on these important issues.

Please follow the changes to snack time from next week and respond to the consultation on developing healthier packed lunches.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Brown', written over a horizontal line.

Mr John Brown
Headteacher